

## The Peacemaker's First Mark

by MarbleSky

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Summary: "On soft feet, by none detected...Marked by X, two lines connected..." Those two scars made him the Peacemaker. But how exactly did he get that first scar? "Well, I have this to remember her by..." One-shot.

### The Peacemaker's First Mark

"All I'm saying is, there were ways in which you could have made your point perfectly clear without resorting toâ€|\_that\_," Ripred said finally, letting out a long, exasperated breath of air.

The woman stared at him silently, contemplating whether or not she should make him leave. She could banish him from the palace and from Regalia completely. Never again would she have to hear him nag. Never again would he go against her wishes and ruin her plans. Or maybe she should just kill him. Now there was an ideaâ€|

"None of this had to happen," continued Ripred. "It could have been avoided."

"I fail to see how," replied Solovet, completely bored with the conversation. She hated having to explain herself to the rat.

"If you were a smarter leader, then maybe you would," Ripred shot back.

Solovet raised an eyebrow, smiling for the first time all day. "Must I remind you, Ripred, that we are in the palace? No one would ever find out if you suddenly disappeared. In fact, some might even praise me," she said calmly.

"Trust me, there are \_so\_ many things said about you, and none of them are even close to being good."

"Precisely my point," she continued, shifting in her chair. "It would

be a good idea to start turning opinions around about me in the Dead Lands."

"Not after today," Ripred muttered, going back to their previous topic. "An attack, unwarranted and unexpected, will have you in their little black book for years to come. Believe me."

"Is it my fault I am better at war than they are?" she asked, almost lazily.

"Honestly, they could care less what the reason is. What they see is a cave full of dead bodies and a smiling general in Regalia taking credit for everything."

Solovet gave him a sly grin. "I hope they also see one of their best fighters dining with the enemy, plotting against them over a platter of shrimp."

"Enemy is such a strong word," said Ripred, looking down at his bowl. "I wouldn't consider the two of us enemies. Simply opposing sides in a common interest."

"Fine. But do they see it that way?"

Ripred thought it over for a moment. "Probably not," he admitted.

"And yet here you are trying to make me understand something that is completely pointless," she told him. "Why are you not over there explaining things to them?"

"Easy. They don't feed me."

Solovet sent him an eye roll. "I could just as easily have you killed when you finish your meal."

Ripred smiled at that but didn't say anything. Instead, he only went back to his shrimp, savoring the creamy richness.

"It is the useless bloodshed I wish to avoid," he said after a moment. "Kill the ones that matter. The major players in the game. Why the hell are you wasting your efforts on pawns?"

"It was not useless bloodshed. They were soldiers, were they not?"

"Soldiers? Yes. Followers of King Gorger? No. You could have at least attacked his caves and not the ones hosting the armies that could one day make him fall."

"Gnawers."

Ripred looked up in confusion at her single word. "What?"

"Gnawers," Solovet repeated flatly. "They were gnawers. Whether they like their pitiful excuse of a king or not, they were gnawers. You say they have disagreements with him, but they could just as easily fall under his rule in exchange for a few meals." She took a deep breath and looked down at her own, untouched plate. "Food can be such a powerful tool, especially to those who see so little of it."

Would you not agree?" she asked him, motioning to the dish in front of him.

"Maybe," he admitted, nodding a bit. "But even to those who can supply food, danger is imminent."

"Is that so?"

"You yourself said you could have me killed as soon as I finish here. But your guards are posted by the door. If my death is inevitable tonight, who's to say I won't go for your head as soon as you raise your hand and give the order?"

"I do," said Vikus, speaking up for the first time.

Both Solovet and Ripred turned to look at him, but he ignored their questioning stares. He rarely ever got into his wife's affairs, but things were getting out of hand rather quickly tonight. Ripred was a good ally, yes, but he was also young and hotheaded. Not a good combination for someone so lethal.

"Stay out of this, Vikus," Solovet warned him.

"Listen to your wife on this one," added Ripred, locking eyes with the general for a few seconds before looking back at Vikus. "If it came down to it, I would take anyone who stood in my way. And you're the last one I wish to hurt."

"No one is killing anyone here today," Vikus sighed.

"Easy to dictate from your position," muttered Ripred.

"He wishes for me to show weakness, Vikus," explained Solovet, eyeing the rat. "And that is something I shall never do."

"Not weakness," argued Vikus. "He simply wishes for you to see a different side of the war."

"There is no other si-"

"Besides, you have already proven your dominance far beyond what we could have imagined. Call the army back and you will be no less intimidating to them."

There was a moment of quiet as the words settled on all of them. Ripred looked at Solovet expectantly, waiting for her to make a decision. He wished she would hurry up so he could get back to his food.

Solovet crossed her arms while she stared at a napkin on the table, deep in thought. After a while, she looked up at Ripred and frowned.

"Fine. I will announce for a retreat."

"Fine, I will announce for a retreatâ€¦but?"

Solovet's frown deepened. "But I need something in return."

"Name it," said Ripred.

"It has to be something I can always have."

"Like leverage?"

"Not exactly," she said slowly.

"But something that won't go away. Something permanent."

A devilish look spread over Solovet's face. "Precisely."

"Well," he breathed, finally deciding to finish his shrimp. He stuck his snout into the bowl and spoke through mouthfuls. "You want something that'll never go away but you don't want leverage that you can use for blackmail. We might have to think about this for a while because I have no idea what that might be."

Solovet tapped her fingers on the table while the wicked grin on her face widened.

"I think\_ I\_ have an idea," she said in a low voice.

Had Ripred been prepared or expecting it, she would have never gotten even remotely close to having such an opportunity. Sure, they were talking about killing each other a second ago, but he knew neither of them were serious.

Or at least that's what he thought.

He was in the middle of slurping up some cream when he felt a sharp pain shoot across his right eye. He immediately froze, trying to register exactly what had happened.

Had she justâ€|?

Ripred sat completely still for a few seconds, thinking about the likeliness of her doing something like that.

Sure enough, he saw blood beginning to drip down into his bowl, tainting the cream with a dark red color. Judging by the pain, he knew the cut was deep. It was either his sheer luck or her deadly accuracy that had kept his eye from being torn out of the socket, but it was definitely going to scar his face.

The breaths escaping his lungs rose with the beating of his heart, and he could feel his muscles starting to twitch and coil up. He lifted his face slowly to see the smug look on Solovet's face as she wiped off that stupid jeweled dagger of hers.

"I think this should do," she said with a smirk. "I will call for the retreat of my troops."

With his vision splintering, the rest of his surroundings became more prominent. The guards at the door were on high alert now, their hands resting hesitantly on the hilts of their swords. Ripred wasn't worried about them though. A simple flick of his tail could break their necks, which would only take a second or two of his time. The rest of it could be spent on \_her\_.

Right before Ripred lunged for Solovet's throat, he saw Vikus raise

his hand, the man's expression begging for peace.

Easy for him to say. His face wasn't bleeding.

But he was right.

Nothing would be solved if Ripred killed Solovet right now. In fact, it might even work against his favor. No matter how many of his plans she ruined over the years, she did a good job of keeping Gorger off his back.

And he owed Vikus so much already. The man had gotten him on good terms with the humans and had even gone as far as offer him a friendship.

With all of that in mind, Ripred decided to keep it in. This wasn't a fight for today.

Solovet might be sinister. She might be terrible. She might be ruthless. And crazy. And a bitch. But she was Vikus' wife, and for him, Ripred could hold back his anger for just a little bit longer.

Not even bothering to clean up the blood, Ripred stood from the table and walked out of the room.

He needed patience.

It was something he was getting better at. He could wait to get back to his cave before the thought process began. It would be a long wait, but one day, he would get his revenge for this. Making it look like an accident or a fatal mistake on her behalf would be tough, but he'd manage. The hardest part would probably be looking at Vikus in the eye while he planned his wife's murder. Of course, Vikus might be the next one to get hurt due to Solovet's decisions, and that was enough of a justification to go forward with the plan. She was a deadly poison that was slowly infecting everyone and everything around her. Her own son was proof of that.

Sooner or later, Solovet had to die. And for that, Ripred needed a plan.

What's your plan?

He didn't know, at least not at the moment. But he would know soon enough.

He always did.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Hey everyone! Hope everyone is having a lovely spring. Life has been busy as usual but I've had some time to go over this story, which has been saved on the laptop since forever ago. Written originally by Skychip but I've added a few things to make it a bit longer and more clear. <strong>

\*\*I've always wondered about the origin of Ripred's first scar, and even though there's a million ways he could have gotten it, I rather like this possibility. Please let me know what you think, whether

through a review or a PM. \*\*

\*\*P.S. I've written another story, this time about Gregor and Luxa, but it went under the rated M category. Not too extreme, but I was a bit wary about putting it under the T rating so it's under M just to be safe. Now that you've been warned, check it out if you're interested. :) Thanks so much for reading! \*\*

End  
file.